IN THE CLAIMS

Amend Claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 24, 26, 31, 33, 37, 39, 41, and 43 and add new Claims 47 - 60 so that the claims are as follows.

1. (Currently amended) A structure comprising:

an electron-emitting device which comprises a backplate and an array of laterally separated electron-emissive regions situated over the backplate, each electron-emissive region comprising at least one electron-emissive element;

a light-emitting device coupled to the electron-emitting device to form a hermetically sealed enclosure through which electrons emitted by the electron-emissive regions ~~electron-emitting device~~ pass to strike the light-emitting device and cause it to emit light that produces an image; and

inert gas located in open space of the sealed enclosure, the inert gas consisting of at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) argon at a partial pressure of at least $3x10^{-5}$ torr, and (c) at least one of neon, krypton, xenon, and radon at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr.

2. (Original) A structure as in Claim 1 wherein the structure is a flat-panel display.

3. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 1 wherein the light-emitting device comprises:

a faceplate; and

an array of laterally separated light-emissive regions situated over the faceplate, each light-emissive region situated opposite a corresponding different one of the electron-emissive regions. ~~electron-emitting device comprises: a backplate; and an array of laterally separated electron-emissive regions situated over the backplate, each electron-emissive region comprising at least one electron-emissive element.~~

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4. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 1 ~~Claim 3~~ wherein the electron-emissive regions emit electrons according to field emission.

5. (Original) A structure as in Claim 1 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) neon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-5}$ torr and (b) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr.

6. (Original) A structure as in Claim 1 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) neon at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) argon at a partial pressure of at least $4x10^{-5}$ torr, (d) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-6}$ torr, and (e) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr.

7. (Original) A structure as in Claim 1 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-4}$ torr, (b) at least one of neon and argon at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-6}$ torr, and (d) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-6}$ torr.

8. (Original) A structure as in Claim 1 further including a getter for collecting non-inert contaminant material present in the sealed enclosure.

9. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 8 wherein the electron-emitting device has an active electron-emitting portion across which electrons are emitted from the electron-emissive regions, ~~electron-emitting device,~~ the getter being distributed across the active electron-emitting portion.

10. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 1 further including a reservoir for supplying further inert gas to the open space of the sealed enclosure.

11. (Original) A structure as in Claim 1 wherein the inert gas is at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-1}$ torr.

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12. (Original) A structure as in Claim 1 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-1}$ torr, (b) neon at a partial pressure of no more than $5x10^{-2}$ torr, (c) argon at a partial pressure of no more than

$1x10^{-2}$ torr, (d) krypton at a partial pressure of no more than $5x10^{-3}$ torr, and (e) xenon or radon at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-3}$ torr.

13. (Currently amended) A structure comprising:

an electron-emitting device which comprises a backplate and an array of laterally separated electron-emissive regions situated over the backplate, each electron-emissive region comprising at least one electron-emissive element;

a light-emitting device coupled to the electron-emitting device to form a hermetically sealed enclosure through which electrons emitted by the electron-emissive regions ~~electron-emitting device~~ pass to strike the light-emitting device and cause it to emit light that produces an image;

inert gas located in open space of the sealed enclosure at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr; and

a reservoir for supplying further inert gas to the open space of the sealed enclosure.

14. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the structure is a flat-panel display.

15. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the light-emitting device comprises:

a faceplate; and

an array of laterally separated light-emissive regions situated over the faceplate, each light-emissive region situated opposite a corresponding different one of the electron-emissive regions. ~~electron-emitting device comprises: a backplate; and an array of laterally separated electron-emissive regions situated over the backplate, each electron-emissive region comprising at least one electron-emissive element.~~

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16. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the electron-emissive regions emit electrons according to field emission.

17. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the reservoir comprises a container that encloses inert gas, the container having a wall through which inert gas passes from the container to the open space of the sealed enclosure.

18. (Original) A structure as in Claim 17 wherein the wall is gas permeable.

19. (Original) A structure as in Claim 17 wherein at least part of the inert gas in the container is in gaseous form.

20. (Original) A structure as in Claim 17 wherein at least part of the inert gas in the container is in inert-gas compound form.

21. (Original) A structure as in Claim 17 wherein at least part of the inert gas in the container is present in inert-gas absorbent-material form.

22. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the reservoir comprises at least one piece of inert-gas compound material.

23. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the reservoir comprises at least one piece of absorbent material charged with inert gas.

24. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the reservoir comprises ~~of~~ at least one piece of material impregnated with inert gas.

25. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 further including a getter for collecting non-inert contaminant material present in the sealed enclosure.

26. (Currently amended) A structure as in Claim 25 wherein the electron-emitting device has an active electron-emitting portion across which electrons are emitted from the electron-emissive regions, ~~electron-emitting device,~~ the getter being distributed across the active electron-emitting portion.

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27. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) at least one of neon and argon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr, and (d) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr.

28. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) at least one of neon and argon at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-6}$ torr, and (d) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr.

29. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the inert gas is at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-1}$ torr.

30. (Original) A structure as in Claim 13 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-1}$ torr, (b) neon at a partial pressure of no more than $5x10^{-2}$ torr, (c) argon at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-2}$ torr, (d) krypton at a partial pressure of no more than $5x10^{-3}$ torr, and (e) xenon or radon at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-3}$ torr.

31. (Currently amended) A method of cleaning a structure comprising an electron-emitting device and a light-emitting device coupled to the electron-emitting device to form a hermetically sealed enclosure through which electrons emitted by an array of laterally separated electron-emissive regions of the electron-emitting device pass to strike the light-emitting device and cause it to emit light that produces an image, open space of the sealed enclosure containing inert gas consisting of at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) argon at a partial pressure of at least $3x10^{-5}$ torr, and (c) at least one of neon, krypton, xenon, and radon at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr, the method comprising operating the electron-emitting device so that part of the electrons emitted by the electron-emissive regions ~~electron-emitting device~~ collide with atoms of the inert gas to produce inert-gas ions which bombard contaminant material situated over the electron-emitting device in the sealed enclosure and cause at least part of the contaminant material to be dislodged from the electron-emitting device.

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32. (Original) A method as in Claim 31 wherein the structure is a flat-panel display.

33. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 31 wherein the ~~electron-emitting device comprises a backplate and an array of laterally separated~~ electron-emissive regions are

situated over a ~~the~~ backplate of the electron-emitting device, each electron-emissive region comprising at least one electron-emissive element, the contaminant material attacked by the inert-gas ions comprising contaminant material situated over the electron-emissive elements.

34. (Original) A method as in Claim 31 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) neon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-5}$ torr and (b) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr.

35. (Original) A method as in Claim 31 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) neon at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) argon at a partial pressure of at least $4x10^{-5}$ torr, (d) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-6}$ torr, and (e) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr.

36. (Original) A method as in Claim 31 further including collecting non-inert material, including particles of the dislodged contaminant material, present in the sealed enclosure.

37. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 31 further including supplying the open space of the sealed enclosure with further inert gas.

38. (Original) A method as in Claim 37 further including collecting non-inert material, including particles of the dislodged contaminant material, present in the sealed enclosure.

39. (Currently amended) A method of cleaning a structure comprising an electron-emitting device and a light-emitting device coupled to the electron-emitting device to form a hermetically sealed enclosure through which electrons emitted by an array of laterally separated electron-emissive regions of the electron-emitting device pass to strike the light-emitting device and cause it to emit light that produces an image, open space of the sealed enclosure containing inert gas at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr, the method comprising: ~~comprising;~~

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operating the electron-emitting device so that part of the electrons emitted by the electron-emissive regions ~~electron-emitting device~~ collide with atoms of the inert gas to produce inert-gas ions which bombard contaminant material situated over the electron-emitting device in the sealed enclosure and cause at least part of the contaminant material to be dislodged from the electron-emitting device; and

supplying the open space of the sealed enclosure with further inert gas.

40. (Original) A method as in Claim 39 wherein the structure is a flat-panel display.

41. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 39 wherein the ~~electron-emitting device comprises a backplate and an array of laterally separated~~ electron-emissive regions are situated over a ~~the~~ backplate of the electron-emitting device, each electron-emissive region comprising at least one electron-emissive element, the contaminant material bombarded by the inert-gas ions comprising contaminant material situated over the electron-emissive elements.

42. (Original) A method as in Claim 39 further including collecting non-inert material, including particles of the dislodged contaminant material, present in the sealed enclosure.

43. (Currently amended) A method as in Claim 39 wherein the further inert gas supplied to the open space of the sealed enclosure compensates at least partially for inert-gas ions that lodge in the electron-emitting device.

44. (Original) A method as in Claim 43 further including collecting non-inert material, including particles of the dislodged contaminant material, present in the sealed enclosure.

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45. (Original) A method as in Claim 39 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) at least one of neon and argon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr, and (d) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr.

46. (Original) A method as in Claim 39 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) at least one of neon and argon at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-6}$ torr, and (d) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr.

47. (New) A method as in Claim 31 wherein the light-emitting device comprises:

a faceplate; and

an array of laterally separated light-emissive regions situated over the faceplate, each light-emissive region situated opposite a corresponding different one of the electron-emissive regions.

48. (New) A method as in Claim 39 wherein the light-emitting device comprises:

a faceplate; and

an array of laterally separated light-emissive regions situated over the faceplate, each light-emissive region situated opposite a corresponding different one of the electron-emissive regions.

49. (New) A structure comprising:

an electron-emitting device;

a light-emitting device coupled to the electron-emitting device to form a hermetically sealed enclosure through which electrons emitted by the electron-emitting device pass to strike the light-emitting device and cause it to emit light that produces an image;

inert gas located in open space of the sealed enclosure at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr; and

a container that encloses inert gas, the container having a wall through which inert gas passes from the container to the open space of the sealed enclosure.

50. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein the structure is a flat-panel display.

51. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein the wall is gas permeable.

52. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein at least part of the inert gas in the container is in gaseous form.

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53. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein at least part of the inert gas in the container is in inert-gas compound form.

54. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein at least part of the inert gas in the container is present in inert-gas absorbent-material form.

55. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 further including a getter for collecting non-inert contaminant material present in the sealed enclosure.

56. (New) A structure as in Claim 55 wherein the electron-emitting device has an active electron-emitting portion across which electrons are emitted from the electron-emitting device, the getter being distributed across the active electron-emitting portion.

57. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) at least one of neon and argon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr, and (d) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-7}$ torr.

58. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of at least $5x10^{-5}$ torr, (b) at least one of neon and argon at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-5}$ torr, (c) krypton at a partial pressure of at least $2x10^{-6}$ torr, and (d) at least one of xenon and radon at a partial pressure of at least $1x10^{-6}$ torr.

59. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein the inert gas is at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-1}$ torr.

60. (New) A structure as in Claim 49 wherein the inert gas comprises at least one of (a) helium at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-1}$ torr, (b) neon at a partial pressure of no more than $5x10^{-2}$ torr, (c) argon at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-2}$ torr, (d) krypton at a partial pressure of no more than $5x10^{-3}$ torr, and (e) xenon or radon at a partial pressure of no more than $1x10^{-3}$ torr.

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